

PD Gazette – September 2018



Figure in a Hammock, by John Singer Sargent,
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A MEMORY

Project Gutenberg's *'Twixt Earth and Stars*, by Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall

Ah, dear! how memory stirs,
Of meadows and soft-voiced thrushes
Of winds that sang amid firs,
Or piped on the cool, damp rushes.

Of twilights and early dawns,
And times when the earth is fairest;
Of gardens with dewy lawns,
And flowers when their scent is rarest.

Of noontide and humming bees,
That gather the love of roses;
Of night-time and sighing trees,
And clouds where the moon reposes.

And, dearest,—of just we two,
Alone in this world of splendour,
Where everything lived for you,
In glorious, sweet surrender.

PHILOCLEA IN THE FOREST.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Burning Wheel*, by Aldous Huxley

I.

'TWas I that leaned to Amoret
With: "What if the briars have tangled Time,
Till, lost in the wood-ways, he quite forget
How plaintive in cities at midnight sounds the chime
Of bells slow-dying from discord to the hush whence
they rose and met.

"And in the forest we shall live free,
Free from the bondage that Time has made
To hedge our soul from its liberty?
We shall not fear what is mighty, and unafraid
Shall look wide-eyed at beauty, nor shrink from its majesty."

But Amoret answered me again:
"We are lost in the forest, you and I;
Lost, lost, not free, though no bonds restrain;
For no spire rises for comfort, no landmark in the sky,
And the long glades as they curve from sight are dark
with a nameless pain.

And Time creates what he devours,--
Music that sweetly dreams itself away,
Frail-swung leaves of autumn and the scent of flowers,
And the beauty of that poised moment, when the day
Hangs 'twixt the quiet of darkness and the mirth of the
sunlit hours."

II.

Mottled and grey and brown they pass,
The wood-moths, wheeling, fluttering;
And we chase and they vanish; and in the grass
Are starry flowers, and the birds sing
Faint broken songs of the dying spring.
And on the beech-bole, smooth and grey,
Some lover of an older day
Has carved in time-blurred lettering
One word only--"Alas."

III.

Lutes, I forbid you! You must never play,
When shimmeringly, glimpse by glimpse
Seen through the leaves, the silken figures sway
In measured dance. Never at shut of day,
When Time perversely loitering limps
Through endless twilights, should your strings
Whisper of light remembered things
That happened long ago and far away:
Lutes, I forbid you! You must never play...

And you, pale marble statues, far descried
Where vistas open suddenly,
I bid you shew yourselves no more, but hide
Your loveliness, lest too much glorified
By western radiance slantingly
Shot down the glade, you turn from stone
To living gods, immortal grown,
And, ageless, mock my beauty's fleeting pride,
You pale, relentless statues, far descried...

HEAD AND SHOULDERS

The Project Gutenberg Etext of *Flappers and Philosophers*
by F. Scott Fitzgerald

In 1915 Horace Tarbox was thirteen years old. In that year he took the examinations for entrance to Princeton University and received the Grade A--excellent--in Caesar, Cicero, Vergil, Xenophon, Homer, Algebra, Plane Geometry, Solid Geometry, and Chemistry.

Two years later while George M. Cohan was composing "Over There," Horace was leading the sophomore class by several lengths and digging out theses on "The Syllogism as an Obsolete Scholastic Form," and during the battle of Chateau-Thierry he was sitting at his desk deciding whether or not to wait until his seventeenth birthday before beginning his series of essays on "The Pragmatic Bias of the New Realists."

After a while some newsboy told him that the war was over, and he was glad, because it meant that Peat Brothers, publishers, would

get out their new edition of "Spinoza's Improvement of the Understanding." Wars were all very well in their way, made young men self-reliant or something but Horace felt that he could never forgive the President for allowing a brass band to play under his window the night of the false armistice, causing him to leave three important sentences out of his thesis on "German Idealism."

The next year he went up to Yale to take his degree as Master of Arts.

He was seventeen then, tall and slender, with near-sighted gray eyes and an air of keeping himself utterly detached from the mere words he let drop.

"I never feel as though I'm talking to him," expostulated Professor Dillinger to a sympathetic colleague. "He makes me feel as though I were talking to his representative. I always expect him to say: 'Well, I'll ask myself and find out.'"

And then, just as nonchalantly as though Horace Tarbox had been Mr. Beef the butcher or Mr. Hat the haberdasher, life reached in, seized him, handled him, stretched him, and unrolled him like a piece of Irish lace on a Saturday-afternoon bargain-counter.

To move in the literary fashion I should say that this was all because when way back in colonial days the hardy pioneers had come to a bald place in Connecticut and asked of each other, "Now, what shall we build here?" the hardiest one among 'em had answered: "Let's build a town where theatrical managers can try out musical comedies!" How afterward they founded Yale College there, to try the musical comedies on, is a story every one knows. At any rate one December, "Home James" opened at the Shubert, and all the students encored Marcia Meadow, who sang a song about the Blundering Blimp in the first act and did a shaky, shivery, celebrated dance in the last.

Marcia was nineteen. She didn't have wings, but audiences agreed generally that she didn't need them. She was a blonde by natural pigment, and she wore no paint on the streets at high noon. Outside of that she was no better than most women.

It was Charlie Moon who promised her five thousand Pall Malls if she would pay a call on Horace Tarbox, prodigy extraordinary. Charlie was a senior in Sheffield, and he and Horace were first cousins. They liked and pitied each other.

Horace had been particularly busy that night. The failure of the Frenchman Laurier to appreciate the significance of the new

realists was preying on his mind. In fact, his only reaction to a low, clear-cut rap at his study was to make him speculate as to whether any rap would have actual existence without an ear there to hear it. He fancied he was verging more and more toward pragmatism. But at that moment, though he did not know it, he was verging with astounding rapidity toward something quite different.

The rap sounded--three seconds leaked by--the rap sounded.

"Come in," muttered Horace automatically.

He heard the door open and then close, but, bent over his book in the big armchair before the fire, he did not look up.

"Leave it on the bed in the other room," he said absently.

"Leave what on the bed in the other room?"

Marcia Meadow had to talk her songs, but her speaking voice was like byplay on a harp.

"The laundry."

"I can't."

Horace stirred impatiently in his chair.

"Why can't you?"

"Why, because I haven't got it."

"Hm!" he replied testily. "Suppose you go back and get it."

Across the fire from Horace was another easychair. He was accustomed to change to it in the course of an evening by way of exercise and variety. One chair he called Berkeley, the other he called Hume. He suddenly heard a sound as of a rustling, diaphanous form sinking into Hume. He glanced up.

"Well," said Marcia with the sweet smile she used in Act Two ("Oh, so the Duke liked my dancing!") "Well, Omar Khayyam, here I am beside you singing in the wilderness."

Horace stared at her dazedly. The momentary suspicion came to him that she existed there only as a phantom of his imagination. Women didn't come into men's rooms and sink into men's Humes. Women brought laundry and took your seat in the street-car and married you later on when you were old enough to know fetters.

This woman had clearly materialized out of Hume. The very froth of her brown gauzy dress was art emanation from Hume's leather arm there! If he looked long enough he would see Hume right through her and then he would be alone again in the room. He passed his fist across his eyes. He really must take up those trapeze exercises again.

"For Pete's sake, don't look so critical!" objected the emanation pleasantly. "I feel as if you were going to wish me away with that patent dome of yours. And then there wouldn't be anything left of me except my shadow in your eyes."

Horace coughed. Coughing was one of his two gestures. When he talked you forgot he had a body at all. It was like hearing a phonograph record by a singer who had been dead a long time.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"I want them letters," whined Marcia melodramatically--"them letters of mine you bought from my grandsire in 1881."

Horace considered.

"I haven't got your letters," he said evenly. "I am only seventeen years old. My father was not born until March 3, 1879. You evidently have me confused with some one else."

"You're only seventeen?" repeated March suspiciously.

"Only seventeen."

"I knew a girl," said Marcia reminiscently, "who went on the ten-twenty-thirty when she was sixteen. She was so stuck on herself that she could never say 'sixteen' without putting the 'only' before it. We got to calling her 'Only Jessie.' And she's just where she was when she started--only worse. 'Only' is a bad habit, Omar--it sounds like an alibi."

"My name is not Omar."

"I know," agreed Marcia, nodding--"your name's Horace. I just call you Omar because you remind me of a smoked cigarette."

"And I haven't your letters. I doubt if I've ever met your grandfather. In fact, I think it very improbable that you yourself were alive in 1881."

Marcia stared at him in wonder.

"Me--1881? Why sure! I was second-line stuff when the Florodora Sextette was still in the convent. I was the original nurse to Mrs. Sol Smith's Juliette. Why, Omar, I was a canteen singer during the War of 1812."

Horace's mind made a sudden successful leap, and he grinned.

"Did Charlie Moon put you up to this?"

Marcia regarded him inscrutably.

"Who's Charlie Moon? "

"Small--wide nostrils--big ears."

She grew several inches and sniffed.

"I'm not in the habit of noticing my friends' nostrils.

"Then it was Charlie?"

Marcia bit her lip--and then yawned. "Oh, let's change the subject, Omar. I'll pull a snore in this chair in a minute."

"Yes," replied Horace gravely, "Hume has often been considered soporific---"

"Who's your friend--and will he die?"

Then of a sudden Horace Tarbox rose slenderly and began to pace the room with his hands in his pockets. This was his other gesture.

"I don't care for this," he said as if he were talking to himself--"at all. Not that I mind your being here--I don't. You're quite a pretty little thing, but I don't like Charlie Moon's sending you up here. Am I a laboratory experiment on which the janitors as well as the chemists can make experiments? Is my intellectual development humorous in any way? Do I look like the pictures of the little Boston boy in the comic magazines? Has that callow ass, Moon, with his eternal tales about his week in Paris, any right to---"

"No," interrupted Marcia emphatically. "And you're a sweet boy. Come here and kiss me."

Horace stopped quickly in front of her.

"Why do you want me to kiss you?" he asked intently, "Do you just go round kissing people?"

"Why, yes," admitted Marcia, unruffled. "'At's all life is. Just going round kissing people."

"Well," replied Horace emphatically, "I must say your ideas are horribly garbled! In the first place life isn't just that, and in the second place. I won't kiss you. It might get to be a habit and I can't get rid of habits. This year I've got in the habit of lolling in bed until seven-thirty---"

Marcia nodded understandingly.

"Do you ever have any fun?" she asked.

"What do you mean by fun?"

"See here," said Marcia sternly, "I like you, Omar, but I wish you'd talk as if you had a line on what you were saying. You sound as if you were gargling a lot of words in your mouth and lost a bet every time you spilled a few. I asked you if you ever had any fun."

Horace shook his head.

"Later, perhaps," he answered. "You see I'm a plan. I'm an experiment. I don't say that I don't get tired of it sometimes--I do. Yet--oh, I can't explain! But what you and Charlie Moon call fun wouldn't be fun to me."

"Please explain."

Horace stared at her, started to speak and then, changing his mind, resumed his walk. After an unsuccessful attempt to determine whether or not he was looking at her Marcia smiled at him.

"Please explain."

Horace turned.

"If I do, will you promise to tell Charlie Moon that I wasn't in?"

"Uh-uh."

"Very well, then. Here's my history: I was a 'why' child. I wanted to see the wheels go round. My father was a young

economics professor at Princeton. He brought me up on the system of answering every question I asked him to the best of his ability. My response to that gave him the idea of making an experiment in precocity. To aid in the massacre I had ear trouble--seven operations between the age of nine and twelve. Of course this kept me apart from other boys and made me ripe for forcing. Anyway, while my generation was laboring through Uncle Remus I was honestly enjoying Catullus in the original.

"I passed off my college examinations when I was thirteen because I couldn't help it. My chief associates were professors, and I took a tremendous pride in knowing that I had a fine intelligence, for though I was unusually gifted I was not abnormal in other ways. When I was sixteen I got tired of being a freak; I decided that some one had made a bad mistake. Still as I'd gone that far I concluded to finish it up by taking my degree of Master of Arts. My chief interest in life is the study of modern philosophy. I am a realist of the School of Anton Laurier--with Bergsonian trimmings--and I'll be eighteen years old in two months. That's all."

"Whew!" exclaimed Marcia. "That's enough! You do a neat job with the parts of speech."

"Satisfied?"

"No, you haven't kissed me."

"It's not in my programme," demurred Horace. "Understand that I don't pretend to be above physical things. They have their place, but---"

"Oh, don't be so darned reasonable!"

"I can't help it."

"I hate these slot-machine people."

"I assure you I---" began Horace.

"Oh shut up!"

"My own rationality---"

"I didn't say anything about your nationality. You're Amuricun, ar'n't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's O.K. with me. I got a notion I want to see you do something that isn't in your highbrow programme. I want to see if a what-ch-call-em with Brazilian trimmings--that thing you said you were--can be a little human."

Horace shook his head again.

"I won't kiss you."

"My life is blighted," muttered Marcia tragically. "I'm a beaten woman. I'll go through life without ever having a kiss with Brazilian trimmings." She sighed. "Anyways, Omar, will you come and see my show?"

"What show?"

"I'm a wicked actress from 'Home James'!"

"Light opera?"

"Yes--at a stretch. One of the characters is a Brazilian rice-planter. That might interest you."

"I saw 'The Bohemian Girl' once," reflected Horace aloud. "I enjoyed it--to some extent---"

"Then you'll come?"

"Well, I'm--I'm---"

"Oh, I know--you've got to run down to Brazil for the week-end."

"Not at all. I'd be delighted to come---"

Marcia clapped her hands.

"Goodyforyou! I'll mail you a ticket--Thursday night?"

"Why, I---"

"Good! Thursday night it is."

She stood up and walking close to him laid both hands on his shoulders.

"I like you, Omar. I'm sorry I tried to kid you. I thought you'd be sort of frozen, but you're a nice boy."

He eyed her sardonically.

"I'm several thousand generations older than you are."

"You carry your age well."

They shook hands gravely.

"My name's Marcia Meadow," she said emphatically. "Member it-- Marcia Meadow. And I won't tell Charlie Moon you were in."

An instant later as she was skimming down the last flight of stairs three at a time she heard a voice call over the upper banister: "Oh, say---"

She stopped and looked up--made out a vague form leaning over.

"Oh, say!" called the prodigy again. "Can you hear me?"

"Here's your connection Omar."

"I hope I haven't given you the impression that I consider kissing intrinsically irrational."

"Impression? Why, you didn't even give me the kiss! Never fret--so long.

Two doors near her opened curiously at the sound of a feminine voice. A tentative cough sounded from above. Gathering her skirts, Marcia dived wildly down the last flight, and was swallowed up in the murky Connecticut air outside.

Up-stairs Horace paced the floor of his study. From time to time he glanced toward Berkeley waiting there in suave dark-red reputability, an open book lying suggestively on his cushions. And then he found that his circuit of the floor was bringing him each time nearer to Hume. There was something about Hume that was strangely and inexpressibly different. The diaphanous form still seemed hovering near, and had Horace sat there he would have felt as if he were sitting on a lady's lap. And though Horace couldn't have named the quality of difference, there was such a quality--quite intangible to the speculative mind, but real, nevertheless. Hume was radiating something that in all the two hundred years of his influence he had never radiated before.

Hume was radiating attar of roses.

On Thursday night Horace Tarbox sat in an aisle seat in the fifth row and witnessed "Home James." Oddly enough he found that he was enjoying himself. The cynical students near him were annoyed at his audible appreciation of time-honored jokes in the Hammerstein tradition. But Horace was waiting with anxiety for Marcia Meadow singing her song about a Jazz-bound Blundering Blimp. When she did appear, radiant under a floppity flower-faced hat, a warm glow settled over him, and when the song was over he did not join in the storm of applause. He felt somewhat numb.

In the intermission after the second act an usher materialized beside him, demanded to know if he were Mr. Tarbox, and then handed him a note written in a round adolescent hand. Horace read it in some confusion, while the usher lingered with withering patience in the aisle.

"Dear Omar: After the show I always grow an awful hunger. If you want to satisfy it for me in the Taft Grill just communicate your answer to the big-timber guide that brought this and oblige.

Your friend,

Marcia Meadow."

"Tell her,"--he coughed--"tell her that it will be quite all right. I'll meet her in front of the theatre."

The big-timber guide smiled arrogantly.

"I giss she meant for you to come roun' t' the stage door."

"Where--where is it?"

"Ou'side. Tunayulef. Down ee alley."

"What?"

"Ou'side. Turn to y' left! Down ee alley!"

The arrogant person withdrew. A freshman behind Horace snickered.

Then half an hour later, sitting in the Taft Grill opposite the hair that was yellow by natural pigment, the prodigy was saying an odd thing.

"Do you have to do that dance in the last act?" he was asking earnestly--"I mean, would they dismiss you if you refused to do it?"

Marcia grinned.

"It's fun to do it. I like to do it."

And then Horace came out with a FAUX PAS.

"I should think you'd detest it," he remarked succinctly. "The people behind me were making remarks about your bosom."

Marcia blushed fiery red.

"I can't help that," she said quickly. "The dance to me is only a sort of acrobatic stunt. Lord, it's hard enough to do! I rub liniment into my shoulders for an hour every night."

"Do you have--fun while you're on the stage?"

"Uh-huh--sure! I got in the habit of having people look at me, Omar, and I like it."

"Hm!" Horace sank into a brownish study.

"How's the Brazilian trimmings?"

"Hm!" repeated Horace, and then after a pause: "Where does the play go from here?"

"New York."

"For how long?"

"All depends. Winter--maybe."

"Oh!"

"Coming up to lay eyes on me, Omar, or aren't you int'rested? Not as nice here, is it, as it was up in your room? I wish we was there now."

"I feel idiotic in this place," confessed Horace, looking round him nervously.

"Too bad! We got along pretty well."

At this he looked suddenly so melancholy that she changed her tone, and reaching over patted his hand.

"Ever take an actress out to supper before?"

"No," said Horace miserably, "and I never will again. I don't

know why I came to-night. Here under all these lights and with all these people laughing and chattering I feel completely out of my sphere. I don't know what to talk to you about."

"We'll talk about me. We talked about you last time."

"Very well."

"Well, my name really is Meadow, but my first name isn't Marcia--it's Veronica. I'm nineteen. Question--how did the girl make her leap to the footlights? Answer--she was born in Passaic, New Jersey, and up to a year ago she got the right to breathe by pushing Nabiscoes in Marcel's tea-room in Trenton. She started going with a guy named Robbins, a singer in the Trent House cabaret, and he got her to try a song and dance with him one evening. In a month we were filling the supper-room every night. Then we went to New York with meet-my-friend letters thick as a pile of napkins.

"In two days we landed a job at Divinerries', and I learned to shimmy from a kid at the Palais Royal. We stayed at Divinerries' six months until one night Peter Boyce Wendell, the columnist, ate his milk-toast there. Next morning a poem about Marvellous Marcia came out in his newspaper, and within two days I had three vaudeville offers and a chance at the Midnight Frolic. I wrote Wendell a thank-you letter, and he printed it in his column--said that the style was like Carlyle's, only more rugged and that I ought to quit dancing and do North American literature. This got me a coupla more vaudeville offers and a chance as an ingenue in a regular show. I took it--and here I am, Omar."

When she finished they sat for a moment in silence she draping the last skeins of a Welsh rabbit on her fork and waiting for him to speak.

"Let's get out of here," he said suddenly.

Marcia's eyes hardened.

"What's the idea? Am I making you sick?"

"No, but I don't like it here. I don't like to be sitting here with you."

Without another word Marcia signalled for the waiter.

"What's the check?" she demanded briskly "My part--the rabbit and the ginger ale."

Horace watched blankly as the waiter figured it.

"See here," he began, "I intended to pay for yours too. You're my guest."

With a half-sigh Marcia rose from the table and walked from the room. Horace, his face a document in bewilderment, laid a bill down and followed her out, up the stairs and into the lobby. He overtook her in front of the elevator and they faced each other.

"See here," he repeated "You're my guest. Have I said something to offend you?"

After an instant of wonder Marcia's eyes softened.

"You're a rude fella!" she said slowly. "Don't you know you're rude?"

"I can't help it," said Horace with a directness she found quite disarming. "You know I like you."

"You said you didn't like being with me."

"I didn't like it."

"Why not?" Fire blazed suddenly from the gray forests of his eyes.

"Because I didn't. I've formed the habit of liking you. I've been thinking of nothing much else for two days."

"Well, if you---"

"Wait a minute," he interrupted. "I've got something to say. It's this: in six weeks I'll be eighteen years old. When I'm eighteen years old I'm coming up to New York to see you. Is there some place in New York where we can go and not have a lot of people in the room?"

"Sure!" smiled Marcia. "You can come up to my 'partment. Sleep on the couch if you want to."

"I can't sleep on couches," he said shortly. "But I want to talk to you."

"Why, sure," repeated Marcia. "in my 'partment."

In his excitement Horace put his hands in his pockets.

"All right--just so I can see you alone. I want to talk to you as we talked up in my room."

"Honey boy," cried Marcia, laughing, "is it that you want to kiss me?"

"Yes," Horace almost shouted. "I'll kiss you if you want me to."

The elevator man was looking at them reproachfully. Marcia edged toward the grated door.

"I'll drop you a post-card," she said.

Horace's eyes were quite wild.

"Send me a post-card! I'll come up any time after January first. I'll be eighteen then."

And as she stepped into the elevator he coughed enigmatically, yet with a vague challenge, at the calling, and walked quickly away.

III

He was there again. She saw him when she took her first glance at the restless Manhattan audience--down in the front row with his head bent a bit forward and his gray eyes fixed on her. And she knew that to him they were alone together in a world where the high-rouged row of ballet faces and the massed whines of the violins were as imperceivable as powder on a marble Venus. An instinctive defiance rose within her.

"Silly boy!" she said to herself hurriedly, and she didn't take her encore.

"What do they expect for a hundred a week--perpetual motion?" she grumbled to herself in the wings.

"What's the trouble? Marcia?"

"Guy I don't like down in front."

During the last act as she waited for her specialty she had an odd attack of stage fright. She had never sent Horace the promised post-card. Last night she had pretended not to see him--

had hurried from the theatre immediately after her dance to pass a sleepless night in her apartment, thinking--as she had so often in the last month--of his pale, rather intent face, his slim, boyish fore, the merciless, unworldly abstraction that made him charming to her.

And now that he had come she felt vaguely sorry--as though an unwonted responsibility was being forced on her.

"Infant prodigy!" she said aloud.

"What?" demanded the negro comedian standing beside her.

"Nothing--just talking about myself."

On the stage she felt better. This was her dance--and she always felt that the way she did it wasn't suggestive any more than to some men every pretty girl is suggestive. She made it a stunt.

"Uptown, downtown, jelly on a spoon,
After sundown shiver by the moon."

He was not watching her now. She saw that clearly. He was looking very deliberately at a castle on the back drop, wearing that expression he had worn in the Taft Grill. A wave of exasperation swept over her--he was criticising her.

"That's the vibration that thrills me,
Funny how affection fi-lls me
Uptown, downtown---"

Unconquerable revulsion seized her. She was suddenly and horribly conscious of her audience as she had never been since her first appearance. Was that a leer on a pallid face in the front row, a droop of disgust on one young girl's mouth? These shoulders of hers--these shoulders shaking--were they hers? Were they real? Surely shoulders weren't made for this!

"Then--you'll see at a glance
"I'll need some funeral ushers with St. Vitus dance
At the end of the world I'll---"

The bassoon and two cellos crashed into a final chord. She paused and poised a moment on her toes with every muscle tense, her young face looking out dully at the audience in what one young girl afterward called "such a curious, puzzled look," and then without bowing rushed from the stage. Into the dressing-room she sped, kicked out of one dress and into another, and caught a taxi

outside.

Her apartment was very warm--small, it was, with a row of professional pictures and sets of Kipling and O. Henry which she had bought once from a blue-eyed agent and read occasionally. And there were several chairs which matched, but were none of them comfortable, and a pink-shaded lamp with blackbirds painted on it and an atmosphere of other stifled pink throughout. There were nice things in it--nice things unrelentingly hostile to each other, offspring of a vicarious, impatient taste acting in stray moments. The worst was typified by a great picture framed in oak bark of Passaic as seen from the Erie Railroad--altogether a frantic, oddly extravagant, oddly penurious attempt to make a cheerful room. Marcia knew it was a failure.

Into this room came the prodigy and took her two hands awkwardly.

"I followed you this time," he said.

"Oh!"

"I want you to marry me," he said.

Her arms went out to him. She kissed his mouth with a sort of passionate wholesomeness.

"There!"

"I love you," he said.

She kissed him again and then with a little sigh flung herself into an armchair and half lay there, shaken with absurd laughter.

"Why, you infant prodigy!" she cried.

"Very well, call me that if you want to. I once told you that I was ten thousand years older than you--I am."

She laughed again.

"I don't like to be disapproved of."

"No one's ever going to disapprove of you again."

"Omar," she asked, "why do you want to marry me?"

The prodigy rose and put his hands in his pockets.

"Because I love you, Marcia Meadow."

And then she stopped calling him Omar.

"Dear boy," she said, "you know I sort of love you. There's something about you--I can't tell what--that just puts my heart through the wringer every time I'm round you. But honey--" She paused.

"But what?"

"But lots of things. But you're only just eighteen, and I'm nearly twenty."

"Nonsense!" he interrupted. "Put it this way--that I'm in my nineteenth year and you're nineteen. That makes us pretty close--without counting that other ten thousand years I mentioned."

Marcia laughed.

"But there are some more 'buts.' Your people---

"My people!" exclaimed the prodigy ferociously. "My people tried to make a monstrosity out of me." His face grew quite crimson at the enormity of what he was going to say. "My people can go way back and sit down!"

"My heavens!" cried Marcia in alarm. "All that? On tacks, I suppose."

"Tacks--yes," he agreed wildly--"on anything. The more I think of how they allowed me to become a little dried-up mummy---

"What makes you think you're that?" asked Marcia quietly--"me?"

"Yes. Every person I've met on the streets since I met you has made me jealous because they knew what love was before I did. I used to call it the 'sex impulse.' Heavens!"

"There's more 'buts,'" said Marcia

"What are they?"

"How could we live?"

"I'll make a living."

"You're in college."

"Do you think I care anything about taking a Master of Arts degree?"

"You want to be Master of Me, hey?"

"Yes! What? I mean, no!"

Marcia laughed, and crossing swiftly over sat in his lap. He put his arm round her wildly and implanted the vestige of a kiss somewhere near her neck.

"There's something white about you," mused Marcia "but it doesn't sound very logical."

"Oh, don't be so darned reasonable!"

"I can't help it," said Marcia.

"I hate these slot-machine people!"

"But we---"

"Oh, shut up!"

And as Marcia couldn't talk through her ears she had to.

IV

Horace and Marcia were married early in February. The sensation in academic circles both at Yale and Princeton was tremendous. Horace Tarbox, who at fourteen had been played up in the Sunday magazines sections of metropolitan newspapers, was throwing over his career, his chance of being a world authority on American philosophy, by marrying a chorus girl--they made Marcia a chorus girl. But like all modern stories it was a four-and-a-half-day wonder.

They took a flat in Harlem. After two weeks' search, during which his idea of the value of academic knowledge faded unmercifully, Horace took a position as clerk with a South American export company--some one had told him that exporting was the coming thing. Marcia was to stay in her show for a few months--anyway until he got on his feet. He was getting a hundred and twenty-five to start with, and though of course they told him it was only a question of months until he would be earning double that, Marcia refused even to consider giving up the hundred and

fifty a week that she was getting at the time.

"We'll call ourselves Head and Shoulders, dear," she said softly, "and the shoulders'll have to keep shaking a little longer until the old head gets started."

"I hate it," he objected gloomily.

"Well," she replied emphatically, "Your salary wouldn't keep us in a tenement. Don't think I want to be public--I don't. I want to be yours. But I'd be a half-wit to sit in one room and count the sunflowers on the wall-paper while I waited for you. When you pull down three hundred a month I'll quit."

And much as it hurt his pride, Horace had to admit that hers was the wiser course.

March mellowed into April. May read a gorgeous riot act to the parks and waters of Manhattan, and they were very happy. Horace, who had no habits whatsoever--he had never had time to form any--proved the most adaptable of husbands, and as Marcia entirely lacked opinions on the subjects that engrossed him there were very few jottings and bumping. Their minds moved in different spheres. Marcia acted as practical factotum, and Horace lived either in his old world of abstract ideas or in a sort of triumphantly earthy worship and adoration of his wife. She was a continual source of astonishment to him--the freshness and originality of her mind, her dynamic, clear-headed energy, and her unfailing good humor.

And Marcia's co-workers in the nine-o'clock show, whither she had transferred her talents, were impressed with her tremendous pride in her husband's mental powers. Horace they knew only as a very slim, tight-lipped, and immature-looking young man, who waited every night to take her home.

"Horace," said Marcia one evening when she met him as usual at eleven, "you looked like a ghost standing there against the street lights. You losing weight?"

He shook his head vaguely.

"I don't know. They raised me to a hundred and thirty-five dollars to-day, and---"

"I don't care," said Marcia severely. "You're killing yourself working at night. You read those big books on economy---"

"Economics," corrected Horace.

"Well, you read 'em every night long after I'm asleep. And you're getting all stooped over like you were before we were married."

"But, Marcia, I've got to---"

"No, you haven't dear. I guess I'm running this shop for the present, and I won't let my fella ruin his health and eyes. You got to get some exercise."

"I do. Every morning I---"

"Oh, I know! But those dumb-bells of yours wouldn't give a consumptive two degrees of fever. I mean real exercise. You've got to join a gymnasium. 'Member you told me you were such a trick gymnast once that they tried to get you out for the team in college and they couldn't because you had a standing date with Herb Spencer?"

"I used to enjoy it," mused Horace, "but it would take up too much time now."

"All right," said Marcia. "I'll make a bargain with you. You join a gym and I'll read one of those books from the brown row of 'em."

"'Pepys' Diary'? Why, that ought to be enjoyable. He's very light."

"Not for me--he isn't. It'll be like digesting plate glass. But you been telling me how much it'd broaden my lookout. Well, you go to a gym three nights a week and I'll take one big dose of Sammy."

Horace hesitated.

"Well---"

"Come on, now! You do some giant swings for me and I'll chase some culture for you."

So Horace finally consented, and all through a baking summer he spent three and sometimes four evenings a week experimenting on the trapeze in Skipper's Gymnasium. And in August he admitted to Marcia that it made him capable of more mental work during the day.

"MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO," he said.

"Don't believe in it," replied Marcia. "I tried one of those patent medicines once and they're all bunk. You stick to gymnastics."

One night in early September while he was going through one of his contortions on the rings in the nearly deserted room he was addressed by a meditative fat man whom he had noticed watching him for several nights.

"Say, lad, do that stunt you were doin' last night."

Horace grinned at him from his perch.

"I invented it," he said. "I got the idea from the fourth proposition of Euclid."

"What circus he with?"

"He's dead."

"Well, he must of broke his neck doin' that stunt. I set here last night thinkin' sure you was goin' to break yours."

"Like this!" said Horace, and swinging onto the trapeze he did his stunt.

"Don't it kill your neck an' shoulder muscles?"

"It did at first, but inside of a week I wrote the QUOD ERAT DEMONSTRANDUM on it."

"Hm!"

Horace swung idly on the trapeze.

"Ever think of takin' it up professionally?" asked the fat man.

"Not I."

"Good money in it if you're willin' to do stunts like 'at an' can get away with it."

"Here's another," chirped Horace eagerly, and the fat man's mouth dropped suddenly agape as he watched this pink-jerseyed Prometheus again defy the gods and Isaac Newton.

The night following this encounter Horace got home from work to find a rather pale Marcia stretched out on the sofa waiting for him.

"I fainted twice to-day," she began without preliminaries.

"What?"

"Yep. You see baby's due in four months now. Doctor says I ought to have quit dancing two weeks ago."

Horace sat down and thought it over.

"I'm glad of course," he said pensively--"I mean glad that we're going to have a baby. But this means a lot of expense."

"I've got two hundred and fifty in the bank," said Marcia hopefully, "and two weeks' pay coming."

Horace computed quickly.

"Inducing my salary, that'll give us nearly fourteen hundred for the next six months."

Marcia looked blue.

"That all? Course I can get a job singing somewhere this month. And I can go to work again in March."

"Of course nothing!" said Horace gruffly. "You'll stay right here. Let's see now--there'll be doctor's bills and a nurse, besides the maid: We've got to have some more money."

"Well," said Marcia wearily, "I don't know where it's coming from. It's up to the old head now. Shoulders is out of business."

Horace rose and pulled on his coat.

"Where are you going?"

"I've got an idea," he answered. "I'll be right back."

Ten minutes later as he headed down the street toward Skipper's Gymnasium he felt a placid wonder, quite unmixed with humor, at what he was going to do. How he would have gaped at himself a year before! How every one would have gaped! But when you opened your door at the rap of life you let in many things.

The gymnasium was brightly lit, and when his eyes became accustomed to the glare he found the meditative fat man seated on a pile of canvas mats smoking a big cigar.

"Say," began Horace directly, "were you in earnest last night when you said I could make money on my trapeze stunts?"

"Why, yes," said the fat man in surprise.

"Well, I've been thinking it over, and I believe I'd like to try it. I could work at night and on Saturday afternoons--and regularly if the pay is high enough."

The fat man looked at his watch.

"Well," he said, "Charlie Paulson's the man to see. He'll book you inside of four days, once he sees you work out. He won't be in now, but I'll get hold of him for to-morrow night."

The fat man was as good as his word. Charlie Paulson arrived next night and put in a wondrous hour watching the prodigy swap through the air in amazing parabolas, and on the night following he brought two age men with him who looked as though they had been born smoking black cigars and talking about money in low, passionate voices. Then on the succeeding Saturday Horace Tarbox's torso made its first professional appearance in a gymnastic exhibition at the Coleman Street Gardens. But though the audience numbered nearly five thousand people, Horace felt no nervousness. From his childhood he had read papers to audiences--learned that trick of detaching himself.

"Marcia," he said cheerfully later that same night, "I think we're out of the woods. Paulson thinks he can get me an opening at the Hippodrome, and that means an all-winter engagement. The Hippodrome you know, is a big---"

"Yes, I believe I've heard of it," interrupted Marcia, "but I want to know about this stunt you're doing. It isn't any spectacular suicide, is it?"

"It's nothing," said Horace quietly. "But if you can think of a nicer way of a man killing himself than taking a risk for you, why that's the way I want to die."

Marcia reached up and wound both arms tightly round his neck.

"Kiss me," she whispered, "and call me 'dear heart.' I love to hear you say 'dear heart.' And bring me a book to read to-morrow. No more Sam Pepys, but something trick and trashy. I've been wild for something to do all day. I felt like writing letters, but I didn't have anybody to write to."

"Write to me," said Horace. "I'll read them."

"I wish I could," breathed Marcia. "If I knew words enough I could write you the longest love-letter in the world--and never get tired."

But after two more months Marcia grew very tired indeed, and for a row of nights it was a very anxious, weary-looking young athlete who walked out before the Hippodrome crowd. Then there were two days when his place was taken by a young man who wore pale blue instead of white, and got very little applause. But after the two days Horace appeared again, and those who sat close to the stage remarked an expression of beatific happiness on that young acrobat's face even when he was twisting breathlessly in the air in the middle of his amazing and original shoulder swing. After that performance he laughed at the elevator man and dashed up the stairs to the flat five steps at a time--and then tiptoed very carefully into a quiet room.

"Marcia," he whispered.

"Hello!" She smiled up at him wanly. "Horace, there's something I want you to do. Look in my top bureau drawer and you'll find a big stack of paper. It's a book--sort of--Horace. I wrote it down in these last three months while I've been laid up. I wish you'd take it to that Peter Boyce Wendell who put my letter in his paper. He could tell you whether it'd be a good book. I wrote it just the way I talk, just the way I wrote that letter to him. It's just a story about a lot of things that happened to me. Will you take it to him, Horace?"

"Yes, darling."

He leaned over the bed until his head was beside her on the pillow, and began stroking back her yellow hair.

"Dearest Marcia," he said softly.

"No," she murmured, "call me what I told you to call me."

"Dear heart," he whispered passionately--"dearest heart."

"What'll we call her?"

They rested a minute in happy, drowsy content, while Horace considered.

"We'll call her Marcia Hume Tarbox," he said at length.

"Why the Hume?"

"Because he's the fellow who first introduced us."

"That so?" she murmured, sleepily surprised. "I thought his name was Moon."

Her eyes dosed, and after a moment the slow lengthening surge of the bedclothes over her breast showed that she was asleep.

Horace tiptoed over to the bureau and opening the top drawer found a heap of closely scrawled, lead-smeared pages. He looked at the first sheet:

SANDRA PEPYS, SYNCOPATED
BY MARCIA TARBOX

He smiled. So Samuel Pepys had made an impression on her after all. He turned a page and began to read. His smile deepened--he read on. Half an hour passed and he became aware that Marcia had waked and was watching him from the bed.

"Honey," came in a whisper.

"What Marcia?"

"Do you like it?"

Horace coughed.

"I seem to be reading on. It's bright."

"Take it to Peter Boyce Wendell. Tell him you got the highest marks in Princeton once and that you ought to know when a book's good. Tell him this one's a world beater."

"All right, Marcia," Horace said gently.

Her eyes closed again and Horace crossing over kissed her forehead--stood there for a moment with a look of tender pity. Then he left the room.

All that night the sprawly writing on the pages, the constant mistakes in spelling and grammar, and the weird punctuation danced before his eyes. He woke several times in the night, each time full of a welling chaotic sympathy for this desire of Marcia's soul to express itself in words. To him there was something infinitely pathetic about it, and for the first time in months he began to turn over in his mind his own half-forgotten dreams.

He had meant to write a series of books, to popularize the new realism as Schopenhauer had popularized pessimism and William James pragmatism.

But life hadn't come that way. Life took hold of people and forced them into flying rings. He laughed to think of that rap at his door, the diaphanous shadow in Hume, Marcia's threatened kiss.

"And it's still me," he said aloud in wonder as he lay awake in the darkness. "I'm the man who sat in Berkeley with temerity to wonder if that rap would have had actual existence had my ear not been there to hear it. I'm still that man. I could be electrocuted for the crimes he committed.

"Poor gauzy souls trying to express ourselves in something tangible. Marcia with her written book; I with my unwritten ones. Trying to choose our mediums and then taking what we get-- and being glad."

V

"Sandra Pepys, Syncopated," with an introduction by Peter Boyce Wendell the columnist, appeared serially in JORDAN'S MAGAZINE, and came out in book form in March. From its first published instalment it attracted attention far and wide. A trite enough subject--a girl from a small New Jersey town coming to New York to go on the stage--treated simply, with a peculiar vividness of phrasing and a haunting undertone of sadness in the very inadequacy of its vocabulary, it made an irresistible appeal.

Peter Boyce Wendell, who happened at that time to be advocating the enrichment of the American language by the immediate adoption of expressive vernacular words, stood as its sponsor and thundered his indorsement over the placid bromides of the conventional reviewers.

Marcia received three hundred dollars an instalment for the serial publication, which came at an opportune time, for though Horace's monthly salary at the Hippodrome was now more than Marcia's had ever been, young Marcia was emitting shrill cries which they interpreted as a demand for country air. So early April found them installed in a bungalow in Westchester County, with a place for a lawn, a place for a garage, and a place for everything, including a sound-proof impregnable study, in which

Marcia faithfully promised Mr. Jordan she would shut herself up when her daughter's demands began to be abated, and compose immortally illiterate literature.

"It's not half bad," thought Horace one night as he was on his way from the station to his house. He was considering several prospects that had opened up, a four months' vaudeville offer in five figures, a chance to go back to Princeton in charge of all gymnasium work. Odd! He had once intended to go back there in charge of all philosophic work, and now he had not even been stirred by the arrival in New York of Anton Laurier, his old idol.

The gravel crunched raucously under his heel. He saw the lights of his sitting-room gleaming and noticed a big car standing in the drive. Probably Mr. Jordan again, come to persuade Marcia to settle down' to work.

She had heard the sound of his approach and her form was silhouetted against the lighted door as she came out to meet him. "There's some Frenchman here," she whispered nervously. "I can't pronounce his name, but he sounds awful deep. You'll have to jaw with him."

"What Frenchman?"

"You can't prove it by me. He drove up an hour ago with Mr. Jordan, and said he wanted to meet Sandra Pepys, and all that sort of thing."

Two men rose from chairs as they went inside.

"Hello Tarbox," said Jordan. "I've just been bringing together two celebrities. I've brought M'sieur Laurier out with me. M'sieur Laurier, let me present Mr. Tarbox, Mrs. Tarbox's husband."

"Not Anton Laurier!" exclaimed Horace.

"But, yes. I must come. I have to come. I have read the book of Madame, and I have been charmed"--he fumbled in his pocket--"ah I have read of you too. In this newspaper which I read to-day it has your name."

He finally produced a clipping from a magazine.

"Read it!" he said eagerly. "It has about you too."

Horace's eye skipped down the page.

"A distinct contribution to American dialect literature," it said. "No attempt at literary tone; the book derives its very quality from this fact, as did 'Huckleberry Finn.'"

Horace's eyes caught a passage lower down; he became suddenly aghast--read on hurriedly:

"Marcia Tarbox's connection with the stage is not only as a spectator but as the wife of a performer. She was married last year to Horace Tarbox, who every evening delights the children at the Hippodrome with his wondrous flying performance. It is said that the young couple have dubbed themselves Head and Shoulders, referring doubtless to the fact that Mrs. Tarbox supplies the literary and mental qualities, while the supple and agile shoulder of her husband contribute their share to the family fortunes.

"Mrs. Tarbox seems to merit that much-abused title--'prodigy.' Only twenty---"

Horace stopped reading, and with a very odd expression in his eyes gazed intently at Anton Laurier.

"I want to advise you--" he began hoarsely.

"What?"

"About raps. Don't answer them! Let them alone--have a padded door."

THE WELLFLEET OYSTERMAN

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Cape Cod*, by Henry D. Thoreau

Having walked about eight miles since we struck the beach, and passed the boundary between Wellfleet and Truro, a stone post in the sand,--for even this sand comes under the jurisdiction of one town or another,--we turned inland over barren hills and valleys, whither the sea, for some reason, did not follow us, and, tracing up a Hollow, discovered two or three sober-looking houses within half a mile, uncommonly near the eastern coast. Their garrets were apparently so full of chambers, that their roofs could hardly lie down straight, and we did not doubt that there was room for us there. Houses near the sea are generally low and broad. These were a story and a half high; but if you merely counted the windows in their gable-ends, you would think that there were many stories more, or, at any rate, that the half-story was the only one

thought worthy of being illustrated. The great number of windows in the ends of the houses, and their irregularity in size and position, here and elsewhere on the Cape, struck us agreeably,--as if each of the various occupants who had their _cunabula_ behind had punched a hole where his necessities required it, and, according to his size and stature, without regard to outside effect. There were windows for the grown folks, and windows for the children,--three or four apiece; as a certain man had a large hole cut in his barn-door for the cat, and another smaller one for the kitten. Sometimes they were so low under the eaves that I thought they must have perforated the plate beam for another apartment, and I noticed some which were triangular, to fit that part more exactly. The ends of the houses had thus as many muzzles as a revolver, and, if the inhabitants have the same habit of staring out the windows that some of our neighbors have, a traveller must stand a small chance with them.

Generally, the old-fashioned and unpainted houses on the Cape looked more comfortable, as well as picturesque, than the modern and more pretending ones, which were less in harmony with the scenery, and less firmly planted.

These houses were on the shores of a chain of ponds, seven in number, the source of a small stream called Herring River, which empties into the Bay. There are many Herring Rivers on the Cape; they will, perhaps, be more numerous than herrings soon. We knocked at the door of the first house, but its inhabitants were all gone away. In the meanwhile, we saw the occupants of the next one looking out the window at us, and before we reached it an old woman came out and fastened the door of her bulkhead, and went in again. Nevertheless, we did not hesitate to knock at her door, when a grizzly-looking man appeared, whom we took to be sixty or seventy years old. He asked us, at first, suspiciously, where we were from, and what our business was; to which we returned plain answers.

"How far is Concord from Boston?" he inquired.

"Twenty miles by railroad."

"Twenty miles by railroad," he repeated.

"Didn't you ever hear of Concord of Revolutionary fame?"

"Didn't I ever hear of Concord? Why, I heard the guns fire at the battle of Bunker Hill. [They hear the sound of heavy cannon across the Bay.] I am almost ninety; I am eighty-eight year old. I was fourteen year old at the time of Concord Fight,--and where were you then?"

We were obliged to confess that we were not in the fight.

"Well, walk in, we'll leave it to the women," said he.

So we walked in, surprised, and sat down, an old woman taking our hats and bundles, and the old man continued, drawing up to the large, old-fashioned fireplace,--

"I am a poor good-for-nothing crittur, as Isaiah says; I am all broken down this year. I am under petticoat government here."

The family consisted of the old man, his wife, and his daughter, who appeared nearly as old as her mother, a fool, her son (a brutish-looking, middle-aged man, with a prominent lower face, who was standing by the hearth when we entered, but immediately went out), and a little boy of ten.

While my companion talked with the women, I talked with the old man. They said that he was old and foolish, but he was evidently too knowing for them.

"These women," said he to me, "are both of them poor good-for-nothing critturs. This one is my wife. I married her sixty-four years ago. She is eighty-four years old, and as deaf as an adder, and the other is not much better."

He thought well of the Bible, or at least he spoke well, and did not think ill, of it, for that would not have been prudent for a man of his age. He said that he had read it attentively for many years, and he had much of it at his tongue's end. He seemed deeply impressed with a sense of his own nothingness, and would repeatedly exclaim,--

"I am a nothing. What I gather from my Bible is just this: that man is a poor good-for-nothing crittur, and everything is just as God sees fit and disposes."

"May I ask your name?" I said.

"Yes," he answered, "I am not ashamed to tell my name. My name is----. My great-grandfather came over from England and settled here."

He was an old Wellfleet oysterman, who had acquired a competency in that business, and had sons still engaged in it.

Nearly all the oyster shops and stands in Massachusetts, I am told, are supplied and kept by natives of Wellfleet, and a part of this town is still called Billingsgate from the oysters having been formerly planted there; but the native oysters are said to have died in 1770. Various causes are assigned for this, such as a ground frost, the carcasses of blackfish kept to rot in the harbor, and the like, but the most common account of the matter is,--and I find that a similar superstition with

regard to the disappearance of fishes exists almost everywhere,--that when Wellfleet began to quarrel with the neighboring towns about the right to gather them, yellow specks appeared in them, and Providence caused them to disappear. A few years ago sixty thousand bushels were annually brought from the South and planted in the harbor of Wellfleet till they attained "the proper relish of Billingsgate"; but now they are imported commonly full-grown, and laid down near their markets, at Boston and elsewhere, where the water, being a mixture of salt and fresh, suits them better. The business was said to be still good and improving.

The old man said that the oysters were liable to freeze in the winter, if planted too high; but if it were not "so cold as to strain their eyes" they were not injured. The inhabitants of New Brunswick have noticed that "ice will not form over an oyster-bed, unless the cold is very intense indeed, and when the bays are frozen over the oyster-beds are easily discovered by the water above them remaining unfrozen, or as the French residents say, *_degèle_*." Our host said that they kept them in cellars all winter.

"Without anything to eat or drink?" I asked.

"Without anything to eat or drink," he answered.

"Can the oysters move?"

"Just as much as my shoe."

But when I caught him saying that they "bedded themselves down in the sand, flat side up, round side down," I told him that my shoe could not do that, without the aid of my foot in it; at which he said that they merely settled down as they grew; if put down in a square they would be found so; but the clam could move quite fast. I have since been told by oystermen of Long Island, where the oyster is still indigenous and abundant, that they are found in large masses attached to the parent in their midst, and are so taken up with their tongs; in which case, they say, the age of the young proves that there could have been no motion for five or six years at least. And Buckland in his *Curiosities of Natural History* (page 50) says: "An oyster who has once taken up his position and fixed himself when quite young can never make a change. Oysters, nevertheless, that have not fixed themselves, but remain loose at the bottom of the sea, have the power of locomotion; they open their shells to their fullest extent, and then suddenly contracting them, the expulsion of the water forwards gives a motion backwards. A fisherman at Guernsey told me that he had frequently seen oysters moving in this way."

Some still entertain the question "whether the oyster was indigenous in Massachusetts Bay," and whether Wellfleet harbor was a "natural habitat"

of this fish; but, to say nothing of the testimony of old oystermen, which, I think, is quite conclusive, though the native oyster may now be extinct there, I saw that their shells, opened by the Indians, were strewn all over the Cape. Indeed, the Cape was at first thickly settled by Indians on account of the abundance of these and other fish. We saw many traces of their occupancy after this, in Truro, near Great Hollow, and at High-Head, near East Harbor River,--oysters, clams, cockles, and other shells, mingled with ashes and the bones of deer and other quadrupeds. I picked up half a dozen arrow-heads, and in an hour or two could have filled my pockets with them. The Indians lived about the edges of the swamps, then probably in some instances ponds, for shelter and water. Moreover, Champlain in the edition of his "Voyages" printed in 1613, says that in the year 1606 he and Poittrincourt explored a harbor (Barnstable Harbor?) in the southerly part of what is now called Massachusetts Bay, in latitude 42 degrees, about five leagues south, one point west of _Cap Blanc_ (Cape Cod), and there they found many good oysters, and they named it "_le Port aux Huistres_" (Oyster Harbor). In one edition of his map (1632), the "_R. aux Escailles_" is drawn emptying into the same part of the bay, and on the map "_Novi Belgii_" in Ogilby's "America" (1670), the words "_Port aux Huistres_" are placed against the same place. Also William Wood, who left New England in 1633, speaks, in his "New England's Prospect," published in 1634, of "a great oyster-bank" in Charles River, and of another in the Mistick, each of which obstructed the navigation of its river. "The oysters," says he, "be great ones in form of a shoehorn; some be a foot long; these breed on certain banks that are bare every spring tide. This fish without the shell is so big, that it must admit of a division before you can well get it into your mouth." Oysters are still found there. (Also, see Thomas Morton's "New English Canaan," page 90.)

Our host told us that the sea-clam, or hen, was not easily obtained; it was raked up, but never on the Atlantic side, only cast ashore there in small quantities in storms. The fisherman sometimes wades in water several feet deep, and thrusts a pointed stick into the sand before him. When this enters between the valves of a clam, he closes them on it, and is drawn out. It has been known to catch and hold coot and teal which were preying on it. I chanced to be on the bank of the Acushnet at New Bedford one day since this, watching some ducks, when a man informed me that, having let out his young ducks to seek their food amid the samphire (_Salicornia_) and other weeds along the river-side at low tide that morning, at length he noticed that one remained stationary, amid the weeds, something preventing it from following the others, and going to it he found its foot tightly shut in a quahog's shell. He took up both together, carried them to his home, and his wife opening the shell with a knife released the duck and cooked the quahog. The old man said that the great clams were good to eat, but that they always took out a certain part which was poisonous, before they cooked them. "People said it would kill a cat." I did not tell him that I had eaten a large one entire that afternoon, but began to think that I was tougher than a cat.

He stated that pedlers came round there, and sometimes tried to sell the women folks a skimmer, but he told them that their women had got a better skimmer than they could make, in the shell of their clams; it was shaped just right for this purpose.--They call them "skim-alls" in some places. He also said that the sun-squall was poisonous to handle, and when the sailors came across it, they did not meddle with it, but heaved it out of their way. I told him that I had handled it that afternoon, and had felt no ill effects as yet. But he said it made the hands itch, especially if they had previously been scratched, or if I put it into my bosom I should find out what it was.

He informed us that no ice ever formed on the back side of the Cape, or not more than once in a century, and but little snow lay there, it being either absorbed or blown or washed away. Sometimes in winter, when the tide was down, the beach was frozen, and afforded a hard road up the back side for some thirty miles, as smooth as a floor. One winter when he was a boy, he and his father "took right out into the back side before daylight, and walked to Provincetown and back to dinner."

When I asked what they did with all that barren-looking land, where I saw so few cultivated fields,--"Nothing," he said.

"Then why fence your fields?"

"To keep the sand from blowing and covering up the whole."

"The yellow sand," said he, "has some life in it, but the white little or none."

When, in answer to his questions, I told him that I was a surveyor, he said that they who surveyed his farm were accustomed, where the ground was uneven, to loop up each chain as high as their elbows; that was the allowance they made, and he wished to know if I could tell him why they did not come out according to his deed, or twice alike. He seemed to have more respect for surveyors of the old school, which I did not wonder at. "King George the Third," said he, "laid out a road four rods wide and straight the whole length of the Cape," but where it was now he could not tell.

This story of the surveyors reminded me of a Long-Islander, who once, when I had made ready to jump from the bow of his boat to the shore, and he thought that I underrated the distance and would fall short,--though I found afterward that he judged of the elasticity of my joints by his own,--told me that when he came to a brook which he wanted to get over, he held up one leg, and then, if his foot appeared to cover any part of the opposite bank, he knew that he could jump it. "Why," I told him, "to say nothing of the Mississippi, and other small watery streams, I could blot out a star with my foot, but I would not engage to jump that distance," and asked how he knew when he had got his leg at the right

elevation. But he regarded his legs as no less accurate than a pair of screw dividers or an ordinary quadrant, and appeared to have a painful recollection of every degree and minute in the arc which they described; and he would have had me believe that there was a kind of hitch in his hip-joint which answered the purpose. I suggested that he should connect his two ankles by a string of the proper length, which should be the chord of an arc, measuring his jumping ability on horizontal surfaces,--assuming one leg to be a perpendicular to the plane of the horizon, which, however, may have been too bold an assumption in this case. Nevertheless, this was a kind of geometry in the legs which it interested me to hear of.

Our host took pleasure in telling us the names of the ponds, most of which we could see from his windows, and making us repeat them after him, to see if we had got them right. They were Gull Pond, the largest and a very handsome one, clear and deep, and more than a mile in circumference, Newcomb's, Swett's, Slough, Horse-Leech, Round, and Herring Ponds, all connected at high water, if I do not mistake. The coast-surveyors had come to him for their names, and he told them of one which they had not detected. He said that they were not so high as formerly. There was an earthquake about four years before he was born, which cracked the pans of the ponds, which were of iron, and caused them to settle. I did not remember to have read of this. Innumerable gulls used to resort to them; but the large gulls were now very scarce, for, as he said, the English robbed their nests far in the north, where they breed. He remembered well when gulls were taken in the gull-house, and when small birds were killed by means of a frying-pan and fire at night. His father once lost a valuable horse from this cause. A party from Wellfleet having lighted their fire for this purpose, one dark night, on Billingsgate Island, twenty horses which were pastured there, and this colt among them, being frightened by it, and endeavoring in the dark to cross the passage which separated them from the neighboring beach, and which was then fordable at low tide, were all swept out to sea and drowned. I observed that many horses were still turned out to pasture all summer on the islands and beaches in Wellfleet, Eastham, and Orleans, as a kind of common. He also described the killing of what he called "wild hens" here, after they had gone to roost in the woods, when he was a boy. Perhaps they were "Prairie hens" (pinnated grouse).

He liked the Beach-pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*), cooked green, as well as the cultivated. He had seen it growing very abundantly in Newfoundland, where also the inhabitants ate them, but he had never been able to obtain any ripe for seed. We read, under the head of Chatham, that "in 1555, during a time of great scarcity, the people about Orford, in Sussex (England) were preserved from perishing by eating the seeds of this plant, which grew there in great abundance on the sea-coast. Cows, horses, sheep, and goats eat it." But the writer who quoted this could not learn that they had ever been used in Barnstable County.

He had been a voyager, then? O, he had been about the world in his day. He once considered himself a pilot for all our coast; but now they had changed the names so he might be bothered.

He gave us to taste what he called the Summer Sweeting, a pleasant apple which he raised, and frequently grafted from, but had never seen growing elsewhere, except once,--three trees on Newfoundland, or at the Bay of Chaleur, I forget which, as he was sailing by. He was sure that he could tell the tree at a distance.

At length the fool, whom my companion called the wizard, came in, muttering between his teeth, "Damn book-pedlers,--all the time talking about books. Better do something. Damn 'em. I'll shoot 'em. Got a doctor down here. Damn him, I'll get a gun and shoot him"; never once holding up his head. Whereat the old man stood up and said in a loud voice, as if he was accustomed to command, and this was not the first time he had been obliged to exert his authority there: "John, go sit down, mind your business,--we've heard you talk before,--precious little you'll do,--your bark is worse than your bite." But, without minding, John muttered the same gibberish over again, and then sat down at the table which the old folks had left. He ate all there was on it, and then turned to the apples, which his aged mother was paring, that she might give her guests some apple-sauce for breakfast, but she drew them away and sent him off.

When I approached this house the next summer, over the desolate hills between it and the shore, which are worthy to have been the birthplace of Ossian, I saw the wizard in the midst of a cornfield on the hillside, but, as usual, he loomed so strangely, that I mistook him for a scarecrow.

This was the merriest old man that we had ever seen, and one of the best preserved. His style of conversation was coarse and plain enough to have suited Rabelais. He would have made a good Panurge. Or rather he was a sober Silenus, and we were the boys Chromis and Mnasilus, who listened to his story.

"Not by Hæmonian hills the Thracian bard.
Nor awful Phoebus was on Pindus heard
With deeper silence or with more regard."

There was a strange mingling of past and present in his conversation, for he had lived under King George, and might have remembered when Napoleon and the moderns generally were born. He said that one day, when the troubles between the Colonies and the mother country first broke out, as he, a boy of fifteen, was pitching hay out of a cart, one Doane, an old Tory, who was talking with his father, a good Whig, said to him, "Why, Uncle Bill, you might as well undertake to pitch that pond into the ocean with a pitchfork, as for the Colonies to undertake to gain

their independence." He remembered well General Washington, and how he rode his horse along the streets of Boston, and he stood up to show us how he looked.

"He was a r--a--ther large and portly-looking man, a manly and resolute-looking officer, with a pretty good leg as he sat on his horse."--"There, I'll tell you, this was the way with Washington." Then he jumped up again, and bowed gracefully to right and left, making show as if he were waving his hat. Said he, _"That _ was Washington."

He told us many anecdotes of the Revolution, and was much pleased when we told him that we had read the same in history, and that his account agreed with the written.

"O," he said, "I know, I know! I was a young fellow of sixteen, with my ears wide open; and a fellow of that age, you know, is pretty wide awake, and likes to know everything that's going on. O, I know!"

He told us the story of the wreck of the _Franklin_, which took place there the previous spring: how a boy came to his house early in the morning to know whose boat that was by the shore, for there was a vessel in distress, and he, being an old man, first ate his breakfast, and then walked over to the top of the hill by the shore, and sat down there, having found a comfortable seat, to see the ship wrecked. She was on the bar, only a quarter of a mile from him, and still nearer to the men on the beach, who had got a boat ready, but could render no assistance on account of the breakers, for there was a pretty high sea running. There were the passengers all crowded together in the forward part of the ship, and some were getting out of the cabin windows and were drawn on deck by the others.

"I saw the captain get out his boat," said he; "he had one little one; and then they jumped into it one after another, down as straight as an arrow. I counted them. There were nine. One was a woman, and she jumped as straight as any of them. Then they shoved off. The sea took them back, one wave went over them, and when they came up there were six still clinging to the boat; I counted them. The next wave turned the boat bottom upward, and emptied them all out. None of them ever came ashore alive. There were the rest of them all crowded together on the forecastle, the other parts of the ship being under water. They had seen all that happened to the boat. At length a heavy sea separated the forecastle from the rest of the wreck, and set it inside of the worst breaker, and the boat was able to reach them, and it saved all that were left, but one woman."

He also told us of the steamer _Cambria's_ getting aground on his shore a few months before we were there, and of her English passengers who roamed over his grounds, and who, he said, thought the prospect from the high hill by the shore "the most delightful they had ever seen," and

also of the pranks which the ladies played with his scoop-net in the ponds. He spoke of these travellers with their purses full of guineas, just as our provincial fathers used to speak of British bloods in the time of King George the Third.

Quid loquar? Why repeat what he told us?

"Aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est,
Candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstribus,
Dulichias vexâsse rates, et gurgite in alto
Ah timidos nautas canibus lacerâsse marinis?"

In the course of the evening I began to feel the potency of the clam which I had eaten, and I was obliged to confess to our host that I was no tougher than the cat he told of; but he answered, that he was a plain-spoken man, and he could tell me that it was all imagination. At any rate, it proved an emetic in my case, and I was made quite sick by it for a short time, while he laughed at my expense. I was pleased to read afterward, in Mourt's Relation of the landing of the Pilgrims in Provincetown Harbor, these words: "We found great muscles (the old editor says that they were undoubtedly sea-clams) and very fat and full of sea-pearl; but we could not eat them, for they made us all sick that did eat, as well sailors as passengers, ... but they were soon well again." It brought me nearer to the Pilgrims to be thus reminded by a similar experience that I was so like them. Moreover, it was a valuable confirmation of their story, and I am prepared now to believe every word of Mourt's Relation. I was also pleased to find that man and the clam lay still at the same angle to one another. But I did not notice sea-pearl. Like Cleopatra, I must have swallowed it. I have since dug these clams on a flat in the Bay and observed them. They could squirt full ten feet before the wind, as appeared by the marks of the drops on the sand.

"Now I'm going to ask you a question," said the old man, "and I don't know as you can tell me; but you are a learned man, and I never had any learning, only what I got by natur."--It was in vain that we reminded him that he could quote Josephus to our confusion.--"I've thought, if I ever met a learned man I should like to ask him this question. Can you tell me how _Axy_ is spelt, and what it means? _Axy_," says he; "there's a girl over here is named _Axy_. Now what is it? What does it mean? Is it Scripture? I've read my Bible twenty-five years over and over, and I never came across it."

"Did you read it twenty-five years for this object.?" I asked.

"Well, _how_ is it spelt? Wife, how is it spelt?" She said: "It is in the Bible; I've seen it."

"Well, how do you spell it?"

"I don't know. A c h, ach, s e h, seh,--Achseh."

"Does that spell Axy? Well, do _you_ know what it means?" asked he, turning to me.

"No," I replied, "I never heard the sound before."

"There was a schoolmaster down here once, and they asked him what it meant, and he said it had no more meaning than a bean-pole."

I told him that I held the same opinion with the schoolmaster. I had been a schoolmaster myself, and had had strange names to deal with. I also heard of such names as Zoleth, Beriah, Amaziah, Bethuel, and Shearjashub, hereabouts.

At length the little boy, who had a seat quite in the chimney-corner, took off his stockings and shoes, warmed his feet, and having had his sore leg freshly salved, went off to bed; then the fool made bare his knotty-looking feet and legs, and followed him; and finally the old man exposed his calves also to our gaze. We had never had the good fortune to see an old man's legs before, and were surprised to find them fair and plump as an infant's, and we thought that he took a pride in exhibiting them. He then proceeded to make preparations for retiring, discoursing meanwhile with Panurgic plainness of speech on the ills to which old humanity is subject. We were a rare haul for him. He could commonly get none but ministers to talk to, though sometimes ten of them at once, and he was glad to meet some of the laity at leisure. The evening was not long enough for him. As I had been sick, the old lady asked if I would not go to bed,--it was getting late for old people; but the old man, who had not yet done his stories, said, "You ain't particular, are you?"

"O, no," said I, "I am in no hurry. I believe I have weathered the Clam cape."

"They are good," said he; "I wish I had some of them now."

"They never hurt me," said the old lady.

"But then you took out the part that killed a cat," said I.

At last we cut him short in the midst of his stories, which he promised to resume in the morning. Yet, after all, one of the old ladies who came into our room in the night to fasten the fire-board, which rattled, as she went out took the precaution to fasten us in. Old women are by nature more suspicious than old men. However, the winds howled around the house, and made the fire-boards as well as the casements rattle well that night. It was probably a windy night for any locality, but we could

not distinguish the roar which was proper to the ocean from that which was due to the wind alone.

The sounds which the ocean makes must be very significant and interesting to those who live near it. When I was leaving the shore at this place the next summer, and had got a quarter of a mile distant, ascending a hill, I was startled by a sudden, loud sound from the sea, as if a large steamer were letting off steam by the shore, so that I caught my breath and felt my blood run cold for an instant, and I turned about, expecting to see one of the Atlantic steamers thus far out of her course, but there was nothing unusual to be seen. There was a low bank at the entrance of the Hollow, between me and the ocean, and suspecting that I might have risen into another stratum of air in ascending the hill,--which had wafted to me only the ordinary roar of the sea,--I immediately descended again, to see if I lost hearing of it; but, without regard to my ascending or descending, it died away in a minute or two, and yet there was scarcely any wind all the while. The old man said that this was what they called the "rut," a peculiar roar of the sea before the wind changes, which, however, he could not account for. He thought that he could tell all about the weather from the sounds which the sea made.

Old Josselyn, who came to New England in 1638, has it among his weather-signs, that "the resounding of the sea from the shore, and murmuring of the winds in the woods, without apparent wind, sheweth wind to follow."

Being on another part of the coast one night since this, I heard the roar of the surf a mile distant, and the inhabitants said it was a sign that the wind would work round east, and we should have rainy weather. The ocean was heaped up somewhere at the eastward, and this roar was occasioned by its effort to preserve its equilibrium, the wave reaching the shore before the wind. Also the captain of a packet between this country and England told me that he sometimes met with a wave on the Atlantic coming against the wind, perhaps in a calm sea, which indicated that at a distance the wind was blowing from an opposite quarter, but the undulation had travelled faster than it. Sailors tell of "tide-rips" and "ground-swells," which they suppose to have been occasioned by hurricanes and earthquakes, and to have travelled many hundred, and sometimes even two or three thousand miles.

Before sunrise the next morning they let us out again, and I ran over to the beach to see the sun come out of the ocean. The old woman of eighty-four winters was already out in the cold morning wind, bareheaded, tripping about like a young girl, and driving up the cow to milk. She got the breakfast with despatch, and without noise or bustle; and meanwhile the old man resumed his stories, standing before us, who were sitting, with his back to the chimney, and ejecting his tobacco juice right and left into the fire behind him, without regard to the

various dishes which were there preparing. At breakfast we had eels, buttermilk cake, cold bread, green beans, doughnuts, and tea. The old man talked a steady stream; and when his wife told him he had better eat his breakfast, he said: "Don't hurry me; I have lived too long to be hurried." I ate of the apple-sauce and the doughnuts, which I thought had sustained the least detriment from the old man's shots, but my companion refused the apple-sauce, and ate of the hot cake and green beans, which had appeared to him to occupy the safest part of the hearth. But on comparing notes afterward, I told him that the buttermilk cake was particularly exposed, and I saw how it suffered repeatedly, and therefore I avoided it; but he declared that, however that might be, he witnessed that the apple-sauce was seriously injured, and had therefore declined that. After breakfast we looked at his clock, which was out of order, and oiled it with some "hen's grease," for want of sweet oil, for he scarcely could believe that we were not tinkers or pedlers; meanwhile he told a story about visions, which had reference to a crack in the clock-case made by frost one night. He was curious to know to what religious sect we belonged. He said that he had been to hear thirteen kinds of preaching in one month, when he was young, but he did not join any of them,--he stuck to his Bible. There was nothing like any of them in his Bible. While I was shaving in the next room, I heard him ask my companion to what sect he belonged, to which he answered:--

"O, I belong to the Universal Brotherhood."

"What's that?" he asked, "Sons o' Temperance?"

Finally, filling our pockets with doughnuts, which he was pleased to find that we called by the same name that he did, and paying for our entertainment, we took our departure; but he followed us out of doors, and made us tell him the names of the vegetables which he had raised from seeds that came out of the Franklin. They were cabbage, broccoli, and parsley. As I had asked him the names of so many things, he tried me in turn with all the plants which grew in his garden, both wild and cultivated. It was about half an acre, which he cultivated wholly himself. Besides the common garden vegetables, there were Yellow-Dock, Lemon Balm, Hyssop, Gill-go-over-the-ground. Mouse-ear, Chick-weed, Roman Wormwood, Elecampane, and other plants. As we stood there, I saw a fish-hawk stoop to pick a fish out of his pond.

"There," said I, "he has got a fish."

"Well," said the old man, who was looking all the while, but could see nothing, "he didn't dive, he just wet his claws."

And, sure enough, he did not this time, though it is said that they often do, but he merely stooped low enough to pick him out with his talons; but as he bore his shining prey over the bushes, it fell to the ground, and we did not see that he recovered it. That is not their

practice.

Thus, having had another crack with the old man, he standing bareheaded under the eaves, he directed us "athwart the fields," and we took to the beach again for another day, it being now late in the morning.

It was but a day or two after this that the safe of the Provincetown Bank was broken open and robbed by two men from the interior, and we learned that our hospitable entertainers did at least transiently harbor the suspicion that we were the men.

DIARIES--MORAL, HISTORICAL, AND CRITICAL.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Curiosities of Literature*, Vol. II (of 3)
by Isaac Disraeli

We converse with the absent by letters, and with ourselves by diaries; but vanity is more gratified by dedicating its time to the little labours which have a chance of immediate notice, and may circulate from hand to hand, than by the honest pages of a volume reserved only for solitary contemplation; or to be a future relic of ourselves, when we shall no more hear of ourselves.

Marcus Antoninus's celebrated work entitled *?? e?? ea?t??*, *_Of the things which concern himself_*, would be a good definition of the use and purpose of a diary. Shaftesbury calls a diary, "A fault-book," intended for self-correction; and a Colonel Harwood, in the reign of Charles the First, kept a diary, which, in the spirit of the times, he entitled "Slips, Infirmities, and Passages of Providence." Such a diary is a moral instrument, should the writer exercise it on himself, and on all around him. Men then wrote folios concerning themselves; and it sometimes happened, as proved by many, which I have examined in manuscript, that often writing in retirement, they would write when they had nothing to write.

Diaries must be out of date in a lounging age, although I have myself known several who have continued the practice with pleasure and utility.[102] One of our old writers quaintly observes, that "the ancients used to take their stomach-pill of self-examination every night. Some used little books, or tablets, which they tied at their girdles, in which they kept a memorial of what they did, against their night-reckoning." We know that Titus, the delight of mankind, as he has been called, kept a diary of all his actions, and when at night he found upon examination that he had performed nothing memorable, he would exclaim, *"_Amici! diem perdidimus!_"* Friends! we have lost a day!

Among our own countrymen, in times more favourable for a concentrated mind than in this age of scattered thoughts and of the fragments of genius, the custom long prevailed: and we their posterity are still reaping the benefit of their lonely hours and diurnal records. It is always pleasing to recollect the name of Alfred, and we have deeply to regret the loss of a manual which this monarch, so strict a manager of his time, yet found leisure to pursue: it would have interested us much more even than his translations, which have come down to us. Alfred carried in his bosom memorandum leaves, in which he made collections from his studies, and took so much pleasure in the frequent examination of this journal, that he called it his hand-book, because, says Spelman, day and night he ever had it in hand with him. This manual, as my learned friend Mr. Turner, in his elaborate and philosophical Life of Alfred, has shown by some curious extracts from Malmsbury, was the repository of his own occasional literary reflections. An association of ideas connects two other of our illustrious princes with Alfred.

Prince Henry, the son of James I., our English Marcellus, who was wept by all the Muses, and mourned by all the brave in Britain, devoted a great portion of his time to literary intercourse; and the finest geniuses of the age addressed their works to him, and wrote several at the prince's suggestion. Dallington, in the preface to his curious "Aphorisms, Civil and Militarie," has described Prince Henry's domestic life: "Myself," says he, "the unablest of many in that academy, for so was his family, had this especial employment for his proper use, which he pleased favourably to entertain, and often to read over."

The diary of Edward VI., written with his own hand, conveys a notion of that precocity of intellect, in that early educated prince, which would not suffer his infirm health to relax in his royal duties. This prince was solemnly struck with the feeling that he was not seated on a throne to be a trifler or a sensualist: and this simplicity of mind is very remarkable in the entries of his diary; where, on one occasion, to remind himself of the causes of his secret proffer of friendship to aid the Emperor of Germany with men against the Turk, and to keep it at present secret from the French court, the young monarch inserts, "This was done on intent to get some friends. The reasonings be in my desk." So zealous was he to have before him a state of public affairs, that often in the middle of the month he recalls to mind passages which he had omitted in the beginning: what was done every day of moment, he retired into his study to set down.--Even James the Second wrote with his own hand the daily occurrences of his times, his reflections and conjectures. Adversity had schooled him into reflection, and softened into humanity a spirit of bigotry; and it is something in his favour, that after his abdication he collected his thoughts, and mortified himself by the penance of a diary.--Could a Clive or a Cromwell have composed one? Neither of these men could suffer solitude and darkness; they started at their casual recollections:--what would they have done,

had memory marshalled their crimes, and arranged them in the terrors of chronology?

When the national character retained more originality and individuality than our monotonous habits now admit, our later ancestors displayed a love of application, which was a source of happiness, quite lost to us. Till the middle of the last century they were as great economists of their time as of their estates; and life with them was not one hurried yet tedious festival. Living more within themselves, more separated, they were therefore more original in their prejudices, their principles, and in the constitution of their minds. They resided more on their estates, and the metropolis was usually resigned to the men of trade in their Royal Exchange, and the preferment-hunters among the backstairs at Whitehall. Lord Clarendon tells us, in his "Life," that his grandfather, in James the First's time, had never been in London after the death of Elizabeth, though he lived thirty years afterwards; and his wife, to whom he had been married forty years, had never once visited the metropolis. On this fact he makes a curious observation: "The wisdom and frugality of that time being such, that few gentlemen made journeys to London, or any other expensive journey, but upon important business, and their wives never; by which Providence they enjoyed and improved their estates in the country, and kept good hospitality in their house, brought up their children well, and were beloved by their neighbours." This will appear a very coarse homespun happiness, and these must seem very gross virtues to our artificial feelings; yet this assuredly created a national character; made a patriot of every country gentleman; and, finally, produced in the civil wars some of the most sublime and original characters that ever acted a great part on the theatre of human life.

This was the age of DIARIES! The head of almost every family formed one. Ridiculous people may have written ridiculous diaries, as Elias Ashmole's;^[103] but many of our greatest characters in public life have left such monuments of their diurnal labours.

These diaries were a substitute to every thinking man for our newspapers, magazines, and Annual Registers; but those who imagine that these are a substitute for the scenical and dramatic life of the diary of a man of genius, like Swift, who wrote one, or even of a lively observer, who lived amidst the scenes he describes, as Horace Walpole's letters to Sir Horace Mann, which form a regular diary, only show that they are better acquainted with the more ephemeral and equivocal labours.

There is a curious passage in a letter of Sir Thomas Bodley, recommending to Sir Francis Bacon, then a young man on his travels, the mode by which he should make his life "profitable to his country and his friends." His expressions are remarkable. "Let all these riches be treasured up, not only in your memory, where time may lessen your stock,

but rather in good writings and books of account, which will keep them safe for your use hereafter." By these good writings and books of account, he describes the diaries of a student and an observer; these "good writings" will preserve what wear out in the memory, and these "books of account" render to a man an account of himself to himself.

It was this solitary reflection and industry which assuredly contributed so largely to form the gigantic minds of the Seldens, the Camdens, the Cokes, and others of that vigorous age of genius. When Coke fell into disgrace, and retired into private life, the discarded statesman did not pule himself into a lethargy, but on the contrary seemed almost to rejoice that an opportunity was at length afforded him of indulging in studies more congenial to his feelings. Then he found leisure not only to revise his former writings, which were thirty volumes written with his own hand, but, what most pleased him, he was enabled to write a manual, which he called Vade Mecum, and which contained a retrospective view of his life, since he noted in that volume the most remarkable occurrences which happened to him. It is not probable that such a MS. could have been destroyed but by accident; and it might, perhaps, yet be recovered.

"The interest of the public was the business of Camden's life," observes Bishop Gibson; and, indeed, this was the character of the men of that age. Camden kept a diary of all occurrences in the reign of James the First; not that at his advanced age, and with his infirm health, he could ever imagine that he should make use of these materials; but he did this, inspired by the love of truth, and of that labour which delights in preparing its materials for posterity. Bishop Gibson has made an important observation on the nature of such a diary, which cannot be too often repeated to those who have the opportunities of forming one; and for them I transcribe it. "Were this practised by persons of learning and curiosity, who have opportunities of seeing into the public affairs of a kingdom, the short hints and strictures of this kind would often set things in a truer light than regular histories."

A student of this class was Sir Symonds D'Ewes, an independent country gentleman, to whose zeal we owe the valuable journals of parliament in Elizabeth's reign, and who has left in manuscript a voluminous diary, from which may be drawn some curious matters.[104] In the preface to his journals, he has presented a noble picture of his literary reveries, and the intended productions of his pen. They will animate the youthful student, and show the active genius of the gentlemen of that day. The present diarist observes, "Having now finished these volumes, I have already entered upon other and greater labours, conceiving myself not to be born for myself alone,

"Qui vivat sibi solus, homo nequit esse beatus,
Malo mori, nam sic vivere nolo mihi."

He then gives a list of his intended historical works, and adds, "These I have proposed to myself to labour in, besides divers others, smaller works: like him that shoots at the sun, not in hopes to reach it, but to shoot as high as possibly his strength, art, or skill will permit. So though I know it impossible to finish all these during my short and uncertain life, having already entered into the thirtieth year of my age, and having many unavoidable cares of an estate and family, yet, if I can finish a little in each kind, it may hereafter stir up some able judges to add an end to the whole:

"*Sic mihi contingat vivere, sicque mori.*"

Richard Baxter, whose facility and diligence, it is said, produced one hundred and forty-five distinct works, wrote, as he himself says, "in the crowd of all my other employments." Assuredly the one which may excite astonishment is his voluminous autobiography, forming a folio of more than seven hundred closely-printed pages; a history which takes a considerable compass, from 1615 to 1684; whose writer pries into the very seed of events, and whose personal knowledge of the leading actors of his times throws a perpetual interest over his lengthened pages. Yet this was not written with a view of publication by himself; he still continued this work, till time and strength wore out the hand that could no longer hold the pen, and left it to the judgment of others whether it should be given to the world.

These were private persons. It may excite our surprise to discover that our statesmen, and others engaged in active public life, occupied themselves with the same habitual attention to what was passing around them in the form of diaries, or their own memoirs, or in forming collections for future times, with no possible view but for posthumous utility. They seem to have been inspired by the most genuine passion of patriotism, and an awful love of posterity. What motive less powerful could induce many noblemen and gentlemen to transcribe volumes; to transmit to posterity authentic narratives, which would not even admit of contemporary notice; either because the facts were then well known to all, or of so secret a nature as to render them dangerous to be communicated to their own times. They sought neither fame nor interest: for many collections of this nature have come down to us without even the names of the scribes, which have been usually discovered by accidental circumstances. It may be said that this toil was the pleasure of idle men:--the idlers then were of a distinct race from our own. There is scarcely a person of reputation among them, who has not left such laborious records of himself. I intend drawing up a list of such diaries and memoirs, which derive their importance from diarists themselves. Even the women of this time partook of the same thoughtful dispositions. It appears that the Duchess of York, wife to James the Second, and the daughter of Clarendon, drew up a narrative of his life; the celebrated Duchess of Newcastle has formed a dignified biography of

her husband; Lady Fanshaw's Memoirs have been recently published; and Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs of her Colonel have delighted every curious reader.

Whitelocke's "Memorials" is a diary full of important public matters; and the noble editor, the Earl of Anglesea, observes, that "our author not only served the state, in several stations, both at home and in foreign countries, but likewise conversed with books, and made himself a large provision from his studies and contemplation, like that noble Roman Portius Cato, as described by Nepos. He was all along so much in business, one would not imagine he ever had leisure for books; yet, who considers his studies might believe he had been always shut up with his friend Selden, and the dust of action never fallen on his gown." When Whitelocke was sent on an embassy to Sweden, he journalised it; it amounts to two bulky quartos, extremely curious. He has even left us a History of England.

Yet all is not told of Whitelocke; and we have deeply to regret the loss, or at least the concealment, of a work addressed to his family, which apparently would be still more interesting, as exhibiting his domestic habits and feelings, and affording a model for those in public life who had the spirit to imitate such greatness of mind, of which we have not many examples.--Whitelocke had drawn up a great work, which he entitled, "Remembrances of the Labours of Whitelocke in the Annales of his Life, for the instruction of his Children." To Dr. Morton, the editor of Whitelocke's "Journal of the Swedish Embassy," we owe the notice of this work; and I shall transcribe his dignified feelings in regretting the want of these MSS. "Such a work, and by such a father, is become the inheritance of every child, whose abilities and station in life may at any time hereafter call upon him to deliberate for his country,--and for his family and person, as parts of the great whole; and I confess myself to be one of those who lament the suppression of that branch of the Annales which relates to the author himself in his private capacity; they would have afforded great pleasure as well as instruction to the world in their entire form. The first volume, containing the first twenty years of his life, may one day see the light; but the greatest part has hitherto escaped my inquiries." This is all we know of a work of equal moral and philosophical curiosity. The preface, however, to these "Remembrances," has been fortunately preserved, and it is an extraordinary production. In this it appears that Whitelocke himself owed the first idea of his own work to one left by his father, which existed in the family, and to which he repeatedly refers his children. He says, "The memory and worth of your deceased grandfather deserves all honour and imitation, both from you and me; his 'Liber Famelicus,' his own story, written by himself, will be left to you, and was an encouragement and precedent to this larger work." Here is a family picture quite new to us; the heads of the house are its historians, and these records of the heart were animated by examples and precepts, drawn from their own bosoms; and, as Whitelocke feelingly

expresses it, "all is recommended to the perusal and intended for the instruction of my own house; and almost in every page you will find a dedication to you, my dear children."

The habit of laborious studies, and a zealous attention to the history of his own times, produced the Register and Chronicle of Bishop Kennett. "Containing matters of fact, delivered in the words of the most authentic papers and records, all daily entered and commented on:" it includes an account of all pamphlets as they appeared. This history, more valuable to us than to his own contemporaries, occupied two large folios, of which only one has been printed: a zealous labour, which could only have been carried on from a motive of pure patriotism. It is, however, but a small part of the diligence of the bishop, since his own manuscripts form a small library of themselves.

The malignant vengeance of Prynne in exposing the diary of Laud to the public eye, lost all its purpose, for nothing appeared more favourable to Laud than this exposition of his private diary. We forget the harshness in the personal manners of Laud himself, and sympathise even with his errors, when we turn over the simple leaves of this diary, which obviously was not intended for any purpose but for his own private eye and collected meditations.[105] There his whole heart is laid open: his errors are not concealed, and the purity of his intentions is established. Laud, who too haughtily blended the prime minister with the archbishop, still, from conscientious motives, in the hurry of public duties, and in the pomp of public honours, could steal aside into solitude, to account to God and himself for every day, and "the evil thereof."

The diary of Henry Earl of Clarendon, who inherited the industry of his father, has partly escaped destruction; it presents us with a picture of the manners of the age, from whence, says Bishop Douglas, we may learn that at the close of the last century, a man of the first quality made it his constant practice to pass his time without shaking his arm at a gaming-table, associating with jockeys at Newmarket, or murdering time by a constant round of giddy dissipation, if not of criminal indulgence. Diaries were not uncommon in the last age: Lord Anglesea, who made so great a figure in the reign of Charles the Second, left one behind him; and one said to have been written by the Duke of Shrewsbury still exists.

But the most admirable example is Lord Clarendon's History of his own "Life," or rather of the court, and every event and person passing before him. In this moving scene he copies nature with freedom, and has exquisitely touched the individual character. There that great statesman opens the most concealed transactions, and traces the views of the most opposite dispositions; and, though engaged, when in exile, in furthering the royal intercourse with the loyalists, and when, on the Restoration, conducting the difficult affairs of a great nation, a careless monarch,

and a dissipated court, yet besides his immortal history of the civil wars, "the chancellor of human nature" passed his life in habitual reflection, and his pen in daily employment. Such was the admirable industry of our later ancestors: their diaries and their memoirs are its monuments!

James the Second is an illustrious instance of the admirable industry of our ancestors. With his own hand this prince wrote down the chief occurrences of his times, and often his instant reflections and conjectures. Perhaps no sovereign prince, said Macpherson, has been known to have left behind him better materials for history. We at length possess a considerable portion of his diary, which is that of a man of business and of honest intentions, containing many remarkable facts which had otherwise escaped from our historians.

The literary man has formed diaries purely of his studies, and the practice may be called *journalising the mind*, in a summary of studies, and a register of loose hints and *sbozzos*, that sometimes happily occur; and like Ringelbergius, that enthusiast for study, whose animated exhortations to young students have been aptly compared to the sound of a trumpet in the field of battle, marked down every night, before going to sleep, what had been done during the studious day. Of this class of diaries, Gibbon has given us an illustrious model: and there is an unpublished quarto of the late Barré Roberts, a young student of genius, devoted to curious researches, which deserves to meet the public eye.[106] I should like to see a little book published with this title, "*Otium delitiosum in quo objecta vel in actione, vel in lectione, vel in visione ad singulos dies Anni 1629 observata representantur*." This writer was a German, who boldly published for the course of one year, whatever he read or had seen every day in that year. As an experiment, if honestly performed, this might be curious to the philosophical observer; but to write down everything, may end in something like nothing.

A great poetical contemporary of our own country does not think that even Dreams should pass away unnoticed; and he calls this register his *Nocturnals*. His dreams are assuredly poetical; as Laud's, who journalised his, seem to have been made up of the affairs of state and religion;--the personages are his patrons, his enemies, and others; his dreams are scenical and dramatic. Works of this nature are not designed for the public eye; they are domestic annals, to be guarded in the little archives of a family; they are offerings cast before our Lares.

Pleasing, when youth is long expired, to trace
The forms our pencil or our pen design'd;
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,
Such the soft image of our youthful mind.
SHENSTONE.

PLAYERS

by Victor James Daley.

From The Project Gutenberg Etext of *An Anthology of Australian Verse*

And after all -- and after all,
Our passionate prayers, and sighs, and tears,
Is life a reckless carnival?
And are they lost, our golden years?

Ah, no; ah, no; for, long ago,
Ere time could sear, or care could fret,
There was a youth called Romeo,
There was a maid named Juliet.

The players of the past are gone;
The races rise; the races pass;
And softly over all is drawn
The quiet Curtain of the Grass.

But when the world went wild with Spring,
What days we had! Do you forget?
When I of all the world was King,
And you were my Queen Juliet?

The things that are; the things that seem --
Who shall distinguish shape from show?
The great processional, splendid dream
Of life is all I wish to know.

The gods their faces turn away
From nations and their little wars;
But we our golden drama play
Before the footlights of the stars.

There lives -- though Time should cease to flow,
And stars their courses should forget --
There lives a grey-haired Romeo,
Who loves a golden Juliet.

SONGS IN A CORNFIELD

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Goblin Market, and Other Poems*, by Christina Rossetti

A song in a cornfield
Where corn begins to fall,
Where reapers are reaping,
Reaping one, reaping all.
Sing pretty Lettice,
Sing Rachel, sing May;
Only Marian cannot sing
While her sweetheart's away.

Where is he gone to
And why does he stay? 10
He came across the green sea
But for a day,
Across the deep green sea
To help with the hay.

His hair was curly yellow
And his eyes were grey,
He laughed a merry laugh
And said a sweet say.
Where is he gone to
That he comes not home? 20
To-day or to-morrow
He surely will come.
Let him haste to joy
Lest he lag for sorrow,
For one weeps to-day
Who'll not weep to-morrow:
To-day she must weep
For gnawing sorrow,
To-night she may sleep
And not wake to-morrow. 30

May sang with Rachel
In the waxing warm weather,
Lettice sang with them,
They sang all together:--

'Take the wheat in your arm
Whilst day is broad above,
Take the wheat to your bosom,
But not a false love.
Out in the fields
Summer heat gloweth, 40
Out in the fields

Summer wind bloweth,
Out in the fields
Summer friend showeth,
Out in the fields
Summer wheat groweth;
But in the winter
When summer heat is dead
And summer wind has veered
And summer friend has fled, 50
Only summer wheat remaineth,
White cakes and bread.
Take the wheat, clasp the wheat
That's food for maid and dove;
Take the wheat to your bosom,
But not a false false love.'

A silence of full noontide heat
Grew on them at their toil:
The farmer's dog woke up from sleep,
The green snake hid her coil. 60
Where grass stood thickest, bird and beast
Sought shadows as they could,
The reaping men and women paused
And sat down where they stood;
They ate and drank and were refreshed,
For rest from toil is good.

While the reapers took their ease,
Their sickles lying by,
Rachel sang a second strain,
And singing seemed to sigh:-- 70

'There goes the swallow--
Could we but follow!
Hasty swallow stay,
Point us out the way;
Look back swallow, turn back swallow, stop swallow.

'There went the swallow--
Too late to follow:
Lost our note of way,
Lost our chance to-day;
Good bye swallow, sunny swallow, wise swallow. 80

'After the swallow
All sweet things follow:
All things go their way,
Only we must stay,
Must not follow; good bye swallow, good swallow.'

Then listless Marian raised her head
Among the nodding sheaves;
Her voice was sweeter than that voice;
She sang like one who grieves:
Her voice was sweeter than its wont 90
Among the nodding sheaves;
All wondered while they heard her sing
Like one who hopes and grieves:--

'Deeper than the hail can smite,
Deeper than the frost can bite,
Deep asleep through day and night,
Our delight.

'Now thy sleep no pang can break,
No to-morrow bid thee wake,
Not our sobs who sit and ache 100
For thy sake.

'Is it dark or light below?
Oh, but is it cold like snow?
Dost thou feel the green things grow
Fast or slow?

'Is it warm or cold beneath,
Oh, but is it cold like death?
Cold like death, without a breath,
Cold like death?'

If he comes to-day 110
He will find her weeping;
If he comes to-morrow
He will find her sleeping;
If he comes the next day
He'll not find her at all,
He may tear his curling hair,
Beat his breast and call.